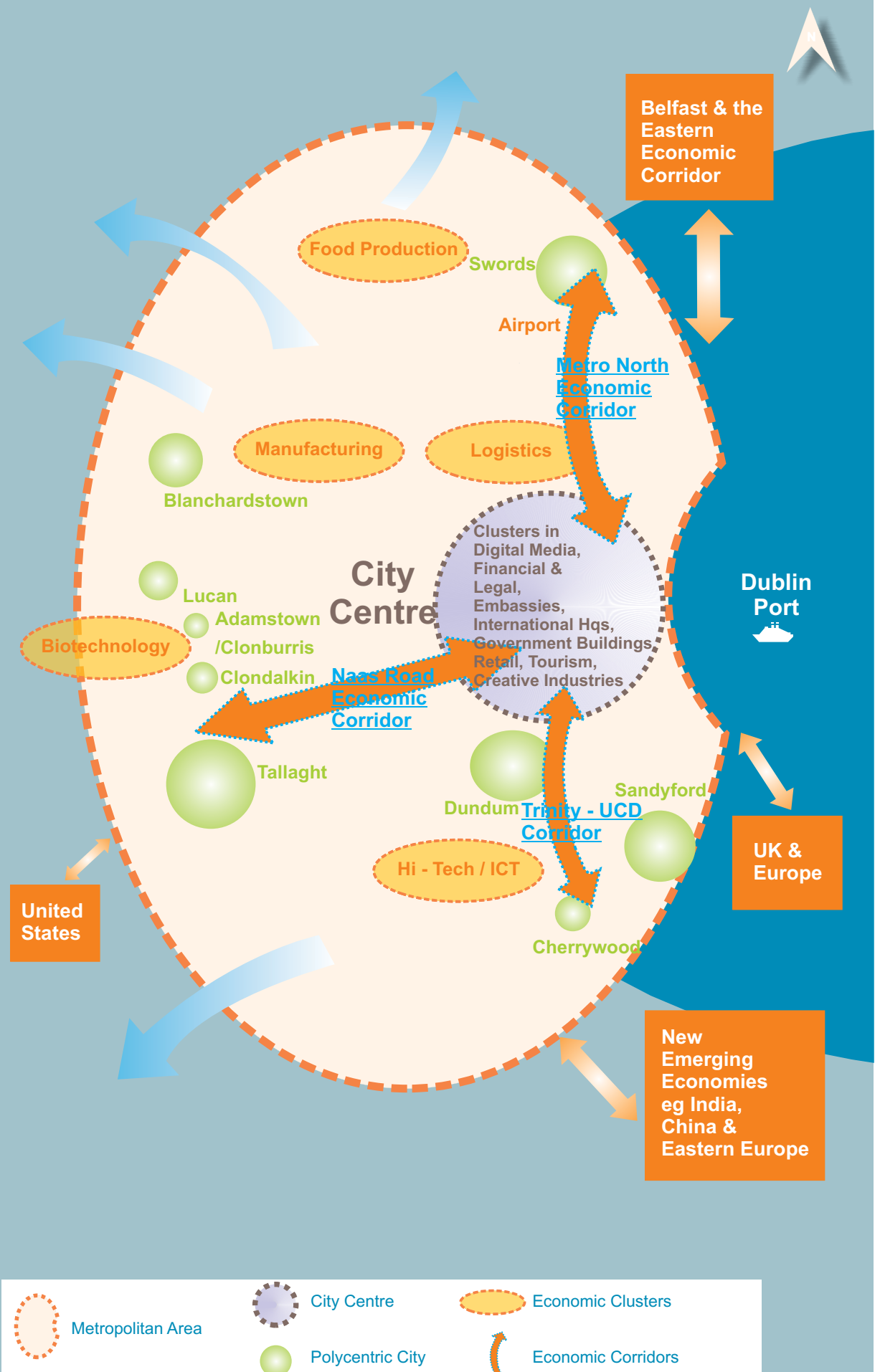


## **CHAPTER 9**

# **REVITALISING THE CITY'S ECONOMY**



## REVITALISING THE CITY'S ECONOMY

Economic success and employment generation is critical to the success of Dublin and the quality of life and prosperity of its citizens. Dublin has spearheaded the growth of the Irish economy. The regional economy of the Greater Dublin Area has been transformed and indicators of a profound change in the region began to appear at the turn of the century. The Dublin metro-region has begun to register as a significant urban centre in the wider European and global context in a variety of ways. Not just commercial and inward investors but skilled, young workers from across the EU and wider a field find the city attractive. Significant improvements in the urban environment such as new spaces and parks, cleaner streets, improved apartment housing, new arts and cultural facilities, and an increasingly open and multi-cultural city at ease with its diversity, have made the city more attractive and competitive.

Real Economic Recovery is one of the three elements of the Core Strategy and a successful city economy both relies on and contributes to the other two elements: A Compact, Quality, Clean, Green, Connected City and; Making Sustainable Neighbourhoods which Support Thriving Communities. Sustainable development has economic, social and environmental components. Development Plan economic policies are also closely interlinked and mutually dependent on all the other plan policies such as retail and other services, housing, arts and culture, movement, infrastructure, recreation. The consolidation and strengthening of the inner city is set out in the Core Strategy.

### 9.1 ACHIEVEMENTS

The strong economic growth of the past decade, coupled with the structural shift to increased employment in services and the knowledge economy has led to a dramatic increase in the scale of the Dublin office market. The office market has more than doubled in size since 1999.

In developing specialisms and drivers of economic growth in the city, significant progress has been made, particularly in the area of tourism. Between 1998 and 2008 the numbers of overseas visitors almost doubled, accompanied by a very high level of investment in tourism infrastructure. Eight of the top ten national visitor attractions are in Dublin city centre.

The Convention Centre Dublin opens in 2010. Dublin's strong performance has seen it rise up the ranking of European cities for tourism and is now competing with Amsterdam, Vienna, Prague, Barcelona and Budapest.

The establishment of 'The Lord Mayor of Dublin International Scholarships' is aimed at creating closer international links with the city and attracting top international students to come and study in Dublin.

In response to the economic challenges, growing unemployment, loss of competitiveness, increasing globalisation and economic change, Dublin City Council and the other Dublin local authorities prepared an *Economic Development Action Plan for the Dublin City Region*. This Action Plan ties in with Government policy on *Building Ireland's Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal* and promotes cities and planning and sustainable development policies as increasingly critical factors in economic development, employment growth and prosperity.

## 9.2 CHALLENGES

Dramatic change in global and national economies is increasing and is likely to accelerate over the coming decades and international competition for investment will intensify. Cities must respond to continuing radical change. The economies of metro-regions must constantly reinvent themselves and respond quickly and effectively to problems in relation to the enhanced mobility of capital, skilled labour and technology innovation.

Dublin is more vulnerable to global competition compared to its competitor cities in other countries. Like the national economy, Dublin's economy must be an exporting one. Global competitiveness challenges include relatively small population, infrastructural deficits, loss of cost competitiveness (include higher property costs) and lower productivity than our competitor cities.

In an economic downturn, regeneration areas face even greater challenges in attracting investment and enterprise and continuing and enhancing regeneration is a priority for the Development Plan.

Dublin must also promote or market itself at an international level to a range of audiences' including investors, key workers, students and other visitors. Events as well as superior city planning, high quality urban design and iconic architecture can all enhance competitive city brands. The Convention Centre Dublin is intended to attract international conventions.

## 9.3 THE STRATEGIC APPROACH (See Fig. 16)

In responding to the challenges facing the economy of the city and its role as the national and regional economic engine, this Development Plan will pursue the following approach;

- Developing enterprise, particularly the services sector which is the critical sector for the city
- Developing Dublin as an 'Innovation City', a world-leading city in promoting creativity, productivity, competition, density, entrepreneurial activity and clustering
- Developing economic, cultural and institutional clusters within the city centre to optimise its economic potential
- Promoting the development of the three economic corridors identified in the *Economic Development Action Plan for the Dublin City Region*;
  - Southern Economic Corridor
  - Metro North Economic Corridor
  - Naas Road/Rail Economic Corridor
- Improving the general attractiveness of a city for people and investors as a key part of maintaining competitiveness and creating a vibrant place that attracts and retains creative people within the city
- Providing appropriate office and commercial spaces as the workplaces for the new knowledge and services economy and enables the city to compete as an attractive location internationally
- Continuing and enhancing regeneration, particularly in the city centre zoned area, as the next big move for major improvements in Dublin's competitiveness
- Promoting tourism as a key driver for the city's economy particularly through making the city attractive for visitors, international education, business tourism and conventions

## 9.4 POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

### 9.4.1 General

*It is the policy of Dublin City Council:*

- RE1** To continue to collaborate with the other Dublin Local Authorities, the Creative Dublin Alliance and all relevant stakeholders towards improving Dublin's international competitiveness and developing Dublin as a significant hub in the European knowledge economy
- RE2** To promote and enhance the role of Dublin as the national economic engine and driver of economic recovery and growth
- RE3** To recognize the crucial need for the planning and sustainable development system to be agile and responsive in the face of challenging and rapidly changing circumstances. Dublin City Council will promote sustainable development by balancing complex sets of economic, environmental or social goals in planning decisions
- RE4** To take a positive and pro-active, approach when considering the economic impact of major planning applications in order to support economic development, enterprise and employment growth and also to deliver high-quality outcomes (See Chapter 16 for Guiding Principles)
- RE5** To work closely with statutory bodies involved in the management of land banks to promote integrated development

*It is an objective of Dublin City Council:*

- REO1** To implement the policies and action set out in *Economic Development Action Plan for the Dublin City Region*, insofar as they are consistent with the development plan
- REO2** To request Economic and Employment Impact Statements for appropriate planning applications and to have regard to the economic criteria set out, in planning decision-making
- REO3** To examine how key economic generators could have greater spin-off benefits for their surrounding areas and to actively promote their development

### 9.4.2 Enterprise

Economic success will depend on the continued strength of our enterprise/services base. The internationally traded services sector is vital to a small open city economy such as Dublin. The US and Europe will continue to be important investors but emerging world economies such as China will be a major source of investment.

The locally traded services sector (e.g. entertainment, restaurants, cultural and other services etc) is a major wealth and employment generator and plays a pivotal role in determining the performance of the economy. Dublin City Council commissioned a report on the potential of immigrant entrepreneurship which sets out recommendations to optimize those opportunities.

*It is the policy of Dublin City Council:*

- RE6** To promote and facilitate foreign direct investment into the city by working closely with the IDA and other agencies, and having regard to the needs of international investment
- RE7** In cooperation with the relevant agencies, to enhance links with countries and companies in relation to foreign direct investment
- RE8** To promote and facilitate enterprise and entrepreneurial activity including that of immigrants, as well as small/start up businesses
- RE9** To promote and facilitate the provision of commercial developments that are flexible and can provide for a range of unit sizes including units suitable for small and start-up enterprises
- RE10** To promote and facilitate the economic and employment generating potential of the locally traded services sector
- RE11** To promote and facilitate the use, including the temporary use, of vacant commercial space and vacant sites, for a wide range of enterprise including cultural uses

*It is an objective of Dublin City Council:*

- REO4** To prepare a report and recommendations on how the city's attractiveness for foreign direct investment and potential in relation to outward direct investment could be enhanced
- REO5** To prepare a report and recommendations on how the economic and employment generating capacity of the locally traded services sector could be enhanced

### **9.4.3 Innovation**

Innovation in all its dimensions will continue as the central driver of wealth creation, economic progress and prosperity in the coming decades. Competitive cities embed innovation across all fields of activity including enterprise, education, tourism, public policy and civic engagement. Qualities such as openness, diversity of people and global links all spur innovation. These assets are greatly supported and enhanced by the availability of a good communication infrastructure, which means that facilitating next generation broadband provision is critical.

*It is the policy of Dublin City Council:*

- RE12** To promote and facilitate Dublin as a creative and innovative city that is globally competitive and an internationally linked, attractive and open city
- RE13** To promote and facilitate lifelong learning including by facilitating night/evening time educational uses, encouraging the optimum use of school buildings in the evenings and during holidays
- RE14** To promote and facilitate the development and growth of Dublin's existing and emerging creative industries

*It is an objective of Dublin City Council:*

- REO6** To work with the Creative Dublin Alliance to identify the challenges and opportunities that enhance the innovation potential of the city and to draw up a programme of work for the delivery of projects that will meet those challenges and develop opportunities, with the aim of positioning Dublin as an Innovation Hub for Europe
- REO7** To establish the contribution of the Creative Industries to the wider economy in Dublin and identify measures that would help support the growth of existing and emerging creative industries in the city region, including film-making and fashion design. In this regard, Dublin City Council will seek to establish a city quarter with appropriate accommodation space, to support and facilitate the creative industries

#### **9.4.4 Clusters and Corridors**

Clusters generate key economic benefits in terms of innovation, synergy and productivity. The clustering benefits of the city centre are limited by the lack of physical integration arising from significant areas of vacant/underutilised land as well as a lack of easy connectivity in some cases.

The three economic corridors set out in the *Economic Development Action Plan for the Dublin Region* will provide a focus for regional economic development and clustering.

*It is the policy of Dublin City Council:*

- RE15** To promote and facilitate economic development and clustering taking place along the Southern, Metro North and Naas Road / Rail Economic Corridors within in the Dublin City Region
- RE16** To promote and facilitate the further development of clusters within the city thereby generating competitiveness, productivity and innovation benefits
- RE17** To encourage the regeneration of the city centre zoned area through the promotion and facilitation of innovation clusters and the intensification of existing clusters such as the Mater Hospital, James's Hospital and the Digital Hub
- RE18** To develop and implement specific land use and other planning policies so as to facilitate the retention and growth of existing and emerging clusters
- RE19** To promote, facilitate and protect the enterprise and employment creation potential of the strategic enterprise/employment landbanks while also encouraging the necessary support infrastructure such as business services, cafes, shops, hotels

*It is an objective of Dublin City Council:*

- REO8** To work with the other Dublin Local Authorities to further develop the practical application of the concept of economic corridors and clustering
- REO9** To identify and map the existing and potential clusters in the City Region and identify effective supports to optimise the clustering benefits

#### 9.4.5 Offices/Commercial/Employment Space

A choice of good quality and cost competitive office and commercial space is critical in attracting investment, supporting enterprises and generating employment. There is a need to encourage the high quality redevelopment of outdated office stock.

Attracting HQ type uses to the city is a key foreign direct investment strategy. However, there is a limited supply of the large footplate offices outside of Docklands, Heuston and the suburbs. Sites of sufficient size to provide such floorplates are often found in regeneration areas.

*It is the policy of Dublin City Council:*

- RE20** To promote and facilitate the supply of commercial space, where appropriate, e.g retail and office including larger floorplates and quantum suitable for HQ types use, as a means of increasing choice and competitiveness
- RE21** To promote and enhance a number of identified Key District Centres as significant employment centres as part of their development as mixed use service centres for the local economy, incorporating a range of retail, employment, recreational and community uses
- RE22** To facilitate home based economic activities and pooled work centres where, by virtue of their nature and scale, they can be accommodated without detriment to the amenities of residential areas
- RE23** To encourage the development of live work units as part of mixed-use developments where such accommodation can be provided without detriment to the amenities of adjoining residents

#### 9.4.6 Economic Area Regeneration

The speedy redevelopment of extensive vacant/underutilised sites especially in the city centre zoned area is critical to sustainable development. Putting in place a critical mass of investment and development in the short-term is essential to break the negative cycle of underdevelopment and to overcome the barriers to progress that have existed.

*It is the policy of Dublin City Council:*

- RE24** To promote and facilitate the transformation of regeneration areas especially inner city areas as a key policy priority and the opportunity to improve the attractiveness and competitiveness of the city, including by promoting high quality investment and by seeking European funding to support regeneration initiatives, to the benefit of residents, employees and visitors.
- RE25** To promote the location of high profile projects in regeneration areas by, for example, facilitating the required quality and quantity of office development in order to encourage high quality jobs and a more positive image for the area
- RE26** To promote and facilitate cultural and tourism facilities including popular culture and art events as regeneration drivers in terms of direct wealth and job creation and making areas more attractive for investors, residents, key skilled workers and visitors

*It is an objective of Dublin City Council:*

**REO10** To map and collate approaches to regeneration and in particular the specific employment and enterprise objectives in regeneration plans, to monitor delivery of these outcomes and encourage dissemination and learning

**REO11** To assess the potential of the Parnell Street and other areas for the creation and the promotion of ethnic retail and restaurant clusters

#### **9.4.7 Tourism: Visitors, International Education, Conventions**

Attracting visitors, international students and conventions is crucial to the economic success including the global connectivity of the city and it is critical to continually improve the city's attractions, facilities and price competitiveness.

*It is the policy of Dublin City Council:*

**RE27** To promote and enhance Dublin as a world class tourist destination for leisure, business and student visitors

**RE28** To promote and facilitate the optimum benefits (including the international marketing benefits) to the city of the Convention Centre Dublin, as well as all other major visitor attractions such as IMMA, Collins Barracks, the Phoenix Park and the Guinness Storehouse

**RE29** To promote Dublin as an International Education Centre, as set out in national policy, and to support and encourage provision of necessary infrastructure such as colleges and high quality custom built and professionally managed student housing

**RE30** To promote and facilitate sporting, cultural and tourism events as important economic drivers for the city

*It is an objective of Dublin City Council:*

**REO12** To assess the need for a range of hotels of suitable size and quality for international conventions/group tourism and the supply of large scale, high quality banqueting facilities

**REO13** To examine the issues and potential additional synergies of promoting Dublin as an International Education Centre and to identify and seek to address the challenges experienced by international students in considering Dublin as a city of choice

**REO14** To examine the feasibility of a cruise terminal in the Poolbeg area and Dublin Port, including a review of the current disembarking point and its connectivity with the city and the development of tour options for visitors within the city and set out recommendations